McKEEVER ★ BALDEON ★ SOTOMAYOR

NOMAD™

GIRL WITHOUT A WORLD

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70 YEARS OF MARVEL COMICS

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THIS IS ME, CONVINCED THAT THE END OF THE TUNNEL JUST LEADS TO MORE TUNNEL.

I MEAN, SERIOUSLY, CAN THEY REALLY BE *THAT* BUSY OUT FRONT?

ONLY A COUPLE MORE TABLES LEFT, RIKKI.

SO YOU'VE BEEN SAYING...

WASHING DISHES FOR CASH OFF THE BOOKS. NOT EXACTLY WHERE I THOUGHT I'D SEE MYSELF. BUT THEN...

...I'M PRETTY SURE *NOTHING* ABOUT WHERE I AM COULDA BEEN PREDICTED.

YOU KNOW THAT STORY WHERE ALICE TUMBLES DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE AND FINDS HERSELF IN A WORLD THAT'S BOTH SUPER STRANGE ***AND*** A REFLECTION OF HER OWN WORLD AT THE SAME TIME?

WELL, I'D NEVER HEARD OF IT UNTIL A FEW WEEKS AGO. 'CAUSE WHERE I COME FROM...

...THAT STORY NEVER ***EXISTED.***

THE PLACE WHERE I COME FROM, IT'S PRETTY MUCH JUST LIKE HERE.

THE BLUE AND GREEN BALL WE LIVE ON IS CALLED "EARTH," WE HAVE POP MUSIC AND PIZZA AND PUPPY DOGS, AND MOST OF THE LINES ON THE MAPS ARE DRAWN THE SAME...

BUT IT'S NOT THE SAME. THERE ARE *TONS* OF LITTLE DIFFERENCES.

FOR INSTANCE, WHERE I COME FROM, I, RIKKI BARNES, WAS THE LOYAL AND *RIDICULOUSLY AMAZING* SIDEKICK TO WWII HERO CAPTAIN AMERICA.

HERE, IN THIS WORLD, CAPTAIN AMERICA IS DEAD. AND, BEST AS I CAN FIGURE, I NEVER, EVER, EVER EXISTED. AT ALL.

LIKE I SAID: LITTLE DIFFERENCES.

IF YOU THINK ALL THIS WOULD BE UNNERVING OR DISCOMBOBULATING, YOU'RE RIGHT.

IF YOU'RE SURPRISED I HAVEN'T LOCKED MYSELF INTO A ROOM AND NEVER LEFT, WELL...

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...SAME HERE.

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WHAT I'VE DECIDED INSTEAD IS THAT IF I CAN MAKE MY LIFE IN THIS WORLD MORE FAMILIAR, MORE LIKE MY WORLD IN CERTAIN WAYS...

...THEN I CAN COPE. I CAN STOP FEELING LIKE THE ROOM IS SPINNING.

AT LEAST, I THINK. I HOPE.

'CAUSE IF NOT...

...UNITS, ALL UNITS BE ADVISED...NO OFFICERS SHOULD ATTEMPT TO GET INVOLVED...SWAT IS IN POSITION AND **CAPTAIN AMERICA** IS PRESENTLY ENGAGING THE THREAT...

...REPEAT, MAINTAIN A PERIMETER BUT DO NOT INTERFERE...

YESYESYES YESYES!

CAPTAIN AMERICA.

WELL, NOT THE **REAL** DEAL, BUT THE GUY THAT'S TAKEN STEVE ROGERS' PLACE. I'VE TRIED MEETING HIM A BAJILLION TIMES...

...BUT EVERY TIME I HEAR HE'S IN NYC, THE ACTION'S ALREADY OVER BEFORE I GET THERE, AND HE'S LONG GONE.

THIS TIME HE ISN'T FAR AT ALL. I KNOW I CAN MAKE IT IN TIME.

I *WAS* TRAINED BY THE BEST, AFTER ALL.

THERE YOU ARE...!

HE'S BETTER THAN I'D EXPECTED HIM TO BE. JUST LIKE MY CAP, HE MAKES IT LOOK SO DARNED EASY.

STILL, I'M SURE THE GUY WOULDN'T MIND A HELPING HAND. AND THEN I FIGURE I CAN PROPERLY INTRODUCE MYSELF.

WHERE'S THE HARM, RIGHT?

YOU'LL STAY RIGHT WHERE YOU *ARE*...

...RIKKI BARNES.

CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS THE SITUATION WELL IN HAND. OTHERWISE, YOU WOULD SEE **ME** AT HIS SIDE.

DON'T BE ALARMED. THOUGH THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN NO **BLACK WIDOW** IN YOUR WORLD, I CAN ASSURE YOU I AM A **FRIEND.**

IN **MY** WORLD--? HOW DO YOU--?

EXTENSIVE DOSSIERS ON THE SUBJECT OF **YOUR** EARTH **DO** EXIST, MISS BARNES. I KNOW YOUR HISTORY, AND I KNOW SOMETHING OF YOUR CURIOUS ARRIVAL AND YOUR TIME SPENT HERE.

I'D **EXPECTED** WE WOULD ENCOUNTER YOU EVENTUALLY.

'WE'? WHAT, ARE YOU, LIKE HIS...HIS **PARTNER?** OR...?

YOU DO REALIZE THAT THIS IS NOT THE MAN YOU CALLED "CAPTAIN AMERICA"?

NO, I KNOW, BUT STILL--

I HAVE TO MEET HIM.

HE'S NOT IN THE MARKET FOR A SIDEKICK, MISS BARNES. AND IF HE WERE, HE WOULD NEVER ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITIES INHERENT IN ALLOWING A TEENAGER TO--

YEAH, I KNOW, LADY! I BASICALLY ALREADY HAD THIS CONVERSATION, OKAY?!*

*IN CAPTAIN AMERICA #600.--TOM

I'M NOT--

I DON'T NEED HIS PITY OR APPROVAL OR WHATEVER, OKAY? I JUST...I FIGURE IF I MEET HIM AND HE MEETS ME, THEN MAYBE...

IT'S... IMPORTANT TO ME, IS ALL.

I SEE.

WELL, FOR CAPTAIN AMERICA TO MEET A BUCKY... THIS IS A MOST TERRIBLE IDEA. IN MANY WAYS.

IT SIMPLY ISN'T GOING TO HAPPEN.

IT'S A SCHOOL NIGHT. YOU SHOULDN'T BE OUT THIS LATE.

SWAT

'TASHA?

WHAT'S THAT ABOUT UP THERE? WHO IS THAT?

IT'S NOTHING, JAMES...

"...JUST AN OVERZEALOUS CHILD PLACING HERSELF IN *HARM'S WAY.*"

I SHOULDN'TA LET THAT WOMAN STOP ME.

AIKEN GARVEY HIGH SCHOOL

I SHOULDA IGNORED HER--OR, BETTER YET, GAVE HER A *BLACK-LEATHER WEDGIE.*

(ACTUALLY, COME TO THINK OF IT, HER OUTFIT WAS ALREADY DOING THAT ALL ON ITS OWN...)

POINT IS, I SHOULDA *TALKED* TO THE NEW CAP.

BUT I DIDN'T. WHY NOT?

YO, RIKKI!

THAT'S *JOHN.* HE'S THE REASON I'M LIVING IN MANHATTAN AS OPPOSED TO MY *ACTUAL* HOMETOWN OF PHILLY...

WOW. NO OFFENSE, BUT YOU'RE LOOKIN' A LITTLE *ZOMBIE* TODAY. LATE NIGHT?

LATE NIGHT.

...*AND* WHY I FORGED THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS TO BECOME RIKKI *BAINES,* HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT.

TCH. GOTTA STOP *PARTYIN'* SO MUCH, GIRL...

DON'T GO THINKING ANYTHING GROSS OR STALKER-Y, NOW. HE'S MY BROTHER.

BASICALLY.

ON *MY* EARTH, JOHN WAS A CLASS-A DIRTBAG. ALWAYS GETTING IN TROUBLE, GOING FROM DRUGGIE PUNK TO NEO-NAZI AT MACH 10, TREATING THE WHOLE FAMILY LIKE DOORMATS...

...NOT TO MENTION THE TIME HE ALMOST *MURDERED* ME, FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES.

JERK.

BUT *THIS* JOHN...HE'S NICE. A SWEETIE. HE ACTUALLY *APPLIES HIMSELF* IN SCHOOL!

THIS COULD BE OUR SECOND CHANCE. HERE, WE CAN BE PALS. HE CAN BE THE TYPE OF BIG BROTHER I'D ALWAYS HOPED HE'D BE.

AND BETTER STILL...

...BEING AROUND HIM MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I COULD EVENTUALLY *BELONG* HERE.

IT'S DOCTOR POWERS!

"NO VOTE, NO VOICE." THE PHRASE IS ONE OF THE CENTRAL TENETS OF OUR DEMOCRACY. HOWEVER...

THE ENGINEERING OF VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES. CREATING INFORMATIVE AND OPINIONATED BLOGS. LOOK AT HOW MUCH INFLUENCE THOSE UNDER 18 EXERTED IN THIS LAST ELECTION...

...AND YOU FOLKS CAN'T EVEN VOTE.

MR. POWERS?

YOU KNOW VERY WELL THAT IT'S DOCTOR POWERS, MR. SURMAN. BUT GO AHEAD.

I GET WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, BUT... WHAT'S IT MATTER WHAT WE DO?

IN THE END, IT'S ALL, LIKE, RUN BY A BUNCH OF OLD FARTS, SO...

THE DUDE ABIDES

NOT AN ALTOGETHER WORTHLESS POINT OF DISCUSSION, BUT I WOULD SAY TO YOU THAT THE "OLD FARTS"--SUCH AS MYSELF--WE'RE NOT THE ONES WITH THE NEW IDEAS AND PARADIGMS.

YOUR GENERATION HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO SIGNIFICANTLY SHAPE THE FUTURE. YOUR TIME IS HERE.

FOR YOUR NEXT ESSAY, I WOULD ASK YOU ALL TO CONSIDER AND ARGUE EITHER FOR OR AGAINST THE FOLLOWING: THAT, WHILE YOUR VOTE IS OF IMMENSE IMPORTANCE, IT'S YOUR VOICE THAT CAN POTENTIALLY HAVE THE MOST IMPACT.

RRRRRRRRRINGGG

I'D ALSO LIKE FOR YOU TO THINK ABOUT OUR DISCUSSION THIS AFTERNOON WHEN THE CANDIDATES FOR STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT ADDRESS YOU ALL!

AND I WILL KNOW IF YOU HAVE SKIPPED!

AND IN, UM, IN *SUMMATION*? LET ME ASSURE MY FELLOW CLASSMATES THAT I AM NOT, UM, YOU KNOW, *NOT* IN IT FOR ALL THE GLAMOUR AND THE PERKS.

THANK YOU.

HOME TIME PLAYER

NO... THANK *YOU.*

YOU KNOW, FOR, UM, FOR *FINISHING?*

YEAH. THAT WAS A *TINY* BIT LONG. AND DRY. AND *LONG.*

AND NOW, OUR FINAL CANDIDATE... *DESMOND DANIELS.*

THANK YOU, PRINCIPAL HUSTON.

FACULTY. STUDENTS.

I PROMISE MY TIME UP HERE WILL BE BRIEF AND *MOSTLY* PAIN-FREE.

HEH.

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ONE TO KEEP TO MYSELF. IN FACT, I'M SURE VERY FEW OF YOU EVEN NOTICED OR *HEARD OF* ME BEFORE TODAY.

IT'S NOT BECAUSE I'M TIMID. I'M NOT ANTISOCIAL.

IT'S THAT, WHEN I LOOK AT THIS SCHOOL--WHEN I *REALLY LOOK* AT IT?

IT'S *NOT* SOMETHING I'M TERRIBLY *PROUD* TO BE A *PART* OF.

AS A STUDENT BODY, WE LACK *RESPONSIBILITY.* EVERYTHING'S *ALWAYS* SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEM.

WE LACK *ACCOUNTABILITY.* EVERYTHING'S ALWAYS SOMEONE *ELSE'S* FAULT.

WE LACK *RESPECT*--FOR OUR ELDERS, OUR PEERS, OUR*SELVES.* LET'S *FACE* IT, GUYS AND GALS...

...THE LIST OF FUNDAMENTAL VALUES WE LACK IS *SCARY.*

BUT I'M *NOT* HERE TO CAST JUDGMENT ON A SINGLE ONE OF YOU.

IT'S ME. *I'VE* BEEN PART OF THE PROBLEM ALL ALONG. BY NOT PLAYING AN *ACTIVE ROLE* IN THIS INSTITUTION, I HAVE ALL BUT *GUARANTEED* THIS FEELING OF DISGUST.

YES, *DISGUST.*

WE SHOULD *ALL* BE DISGUSTED, *STARTING* WITH THAT *SHIRKER* WE SEE IN THE MIRROR. *EACH* OF US HAS A *PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY* TO ASK FOR *BETTER.* WE OWE A *CIVIC DUTY*--TO OUR FELLOW STUDENTS, TO OUR COMMUNITIES...EVEN TO OUR *COUNTRY.*

AND IF WE DO NOTHING? IF WE LET SOMEONE *ELSE* MAKE ALL OUR CHOICES FOR US...?

I'M WILLING TO BET THAT YOU FEEL THE WAY I DO. THAT YOU *WANT* YOUR VOICES TO BE HEARD. TO *MATTER.*

THAT'S WHY I'M HERE TODAY, BECAUSE *SOMEONE* HAS TO BE *FIRST.*

I AM HERE TO STAND UP AND SAY, "I WILL *NOT* STAND ASIDE ANYMORE. I WILL *DO* MY PART. I *WILL* MAKE A DIFFERENCE!"

MY NAME IS *DESMOND DANIELS.* I WANT TO BE YOUR *STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT.*

THANK YOU!

I-I'LL MAKE A DIFFERENCE...

NATSUKI?

I'LL MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

AIKEN GARVEY SPARTANS HIGH SCHOOL

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I WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

01000100 01000001 01000100

YEAH! ME, TOO!

I'LL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

THE DUDE ABIDES

NO WAY.

I WILL! MAKE! A DIF-FERENCE! I WILL! MAKE! A DIF-FERENCE!

MISFITS

THE DUDE ABIDES

I WILL MAKE A DIF-FERENCE!

I WILL MAKE A DIF-FERENCE!

I WILL MAKE A DIF-FERENCE!

SO...THAT WASN'T COMPLETELY CREEPY AND STRANGE. NO, NOT AT ALL.

OH, COME ON...

WHAT? IT WAS COMPLETELY BIZARRE!

I DON'T GET YOU, RIKKI. SO A FEW OF OUR FELLOW CLASSMATES GOT WRAPPED UP IN THAT DESMOND GUY'S SPEECH. WHY GET ALL CYNICAL ABOUT IT?

THERE WERE FIVE. AND THEY WERE ALL FROM TOTALLY DIFFERENT SOCIAL STRATA. HAVE YOU NOT SEEN INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS?

WOW. THAT IS ONE *PARANOID BEAN* IN YOUR BASKET, RIKKI BAINES.

HEY!

HEY, GUYS, THIS IS *NOT* THE BACK CAR OF THE *EXPRESS TRAIN.* REIN IT IN, WOULD YA?

I'M *SERIOUS*, YOU GUYS. HAVE SOME RESPECT FOR THE *REST* OF US!

MIND YOUR OWN *BUSINESS*, SPAZ-BOY.

YOU'VE GOT A *PERSONAL* RESPONSIBILITY TO BEHAVE IN A WAY THAT'S APPROPRIATE FOR THE STUDENT BODY *AS A WHOLE*, AND I'M *NOT LEAVING* TILL *YOU* GET THAT THROUGH YOUR *BULBOUS HEAD!*

HEY, YOU DON'T BACK OFF, I'LL PUT SOMETHING THROUGH *YOUR* HEAD--

OH, NICE.

THREATS OF VIOLENCE. THE *FIRST REFUGE* OF THE *IGNORANT.*

YOU. YOU'RE SELINA'S LITTLE SISTER.

KNOW WHAT SHE'D SAY ABOUT YOU IF SHE KNEW YOU WERE SUCKING FACE IN FRONT OF THE WHOLE SCHOOL? WHAT SHE'D TELL EVERYBODY?

WHATEVER, NATSUKI, SHE WOULDN'T CARE ENOUGH TO--

OH, REALLY. CARE TO TEST YOUR LITTLE THEORY?

HEY, YOU DON'T GET TO DECIDE WHAT WE CAN OR CAN'T--

WE'RE DECIDING FOR OURSELVES WHAT WE'RE WILLING TO TOLERATE.

WE HAVE JUST AS MUCH OF A RIGHT AS YOU.

YEAH, FINE, WHATEVER. JUST LEAVE US ALONE, OKAY?

DON'T TELL SELINA. PLEASE.

WOW. FASHION QUEEN NATSUKI OZAWA TEAMS UP WITH AN ÜBERNERD.

THAT'S WEIRD, RIGHT?

LIKE IF SPIDER-MAN MADE OUT WITH DOCTOR OCTOPUS.

THANK YOU, MANUEL. I'M SO SICK OF PDA.

PUT A MASSIVE EXCLAMATION MARK ON MY SUSPICIONS, YOU SAY? FAIR ENOUGH, JOHN...

I'VE FOUND YOU CAN LEARN A LOT ABOUT A PERSON BY SHADOWING THEM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE FOR A FEW DAYS.

YEAH, I KNOW--STALKER TALK. BUT IT DOESN'T TAKE ME LONG TO SEE THAT IT WAS A ***VERY*** GOOD IDEA TO KEEP TABS ON ***NATSUKI OZAWA.***

SHE'S REALLY ON THE WARPATH WITH ALL THIS PUBLIC SHAMING BUSINESS.

NECKING. SLACKING. BAD LANGUAGE. PROVOCATIVE T-SHIRTS. CELL PHONE ETIQUETTE. TALKING BACK TO FACULTY. BAGGY PANTS.

SOMETIMES SHE GETS HER FRIENDS TO JOIN IN, BUT MOSTLY NATSUKI HURLS INVECTIVES ALONG WITH THE SAME FEW STUDENTS.

AND SHE ***NEVER*** DOES IT ALONE. STRENGTH IN NUMBERS.

IT'S WAY AFTER CAMPUS LOCKDOWN AND ALL FIVE OF DESMOND DANIELS' EAGER BEAVERS HAVE MET UP. I KNOW I'M GETTING ***SOME***WHERE...

...I'M JUST NOT SURE WHERE EXACTLY. OR EVEN ***REMOTELY.***

BUT I ***DO*** KNOW THAT IF I'M GOING TO GO ANY FURTHER, I'LL HAVE TO DO IT WEARING SOMETHING A BIT MORE...

...APPROPRIATE.

SO...

THEY APPARENTLY HAVE MASTER KEYS TO THE SCHOOL. COULDA STOLEN THOSE OFF A JANITOR. MAYBE.

THEY ALL USE PARTICULAR LANGUAGE, LIKE "PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY" AND "CIVIC DUTY."

DESMOND'S WORDS, THOUGH NOT EXACTLY HIS MESSAGE OF NOT JUDGING.

COULD HE BE A PART OF THIS? WHATEVER "THIS" IS?

THEY *ARE* WITHIN THEIR RIGHTS TO VOICE THEIR OPINIONS-- HECK, I'M *TOTALLY* WITH NATSUKI ON THE PHONE STUFF...

...BUT ISN'T WHAT THEY'RE DOING ESSENTIALLY *BULLYING*, JUST WITHOUT THE WEDGIES AND SWIRLIES AND POUNDINGS?

WHOA.

OKAY... WHAT *IS* THIS PLACE?

I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THERE'S SOMETHING TRULY UNSETTLING GOING ON HERE...

RRRRRRAARRRGH!

AAAAAHH!!

RRRRRR...

BAD GIRL.

WHUDD

GRAAAAGH!

OKAY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE OR WHAT YOUR DEAL IS, BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW YOU'RE UP AGAINST A BUCK TWENTY OF HIGHLY S.H.I.E.L.D.-TRAINED--

AAGH!

WSSH

UNF

FUMPP

AOWW!!

SHRUKK

SHRREPP

AAAHN!

WAPP

BAD DOGGIE!

HEEL!

MOVE, RIKKI. MOVE.

CUSTODIAL SUPPLIES

CUSTODIAL SUPPLIES

CUSTODIAL SUPPLIES

FWAMMM

HFF... HNN...

CRAP.

HOLY CRAP.

I DON'T LOOK BACK.

WHEN YOU CONSTANTLY IMAGINE THE WORST, THAT THE THING YOU'RE MOST AFRAID OF IS AT YOUR BACK AND CLOSING IN.

IT'S *WAY* EASIER TO OVERCOME THE IMPULSE TO SIMPLY *PANIC*.

AFTER A FEW MINUTES, I'M SURE THAT I'M NOT BEING CHASED.

IT'S PRETTY MUCH THE *ONLY* THING I'M SURE OF AT THIS POINT.

WHATEVER SURMAN AND NATSUKI AND THE OTHERS ARE INTO, IT'S MORE THAN SOME KIND OF PRANK OR SOCIAL EXPERIMENT.

HAIRY MONSTERS QUICKER AND MEANER THAN ANYTHING I'VE EVER BEEN UP AGAINST *DON'T* STAND GUARD FOR THE *CHESS CLUB*.

I'M BLEEDING. MY COSTUME'S A WRECK.

I'VE GOT THIRTEEN DOLLARS AND CHANGE TO MY NAME AND I MISSED TONIGHT'S SHIFT SO I COULD MIX IT UP WITH SOME SORT OF HUMAN CUJO.

THE BEST THING FOR ME TO DO AT THIS POINT IS FORGET ALL THAT, STITCH MYSELF UP, TAKE A SHOWER AND THEN...

...CHANGE.

HEINLEIN
STRANGER
IN A
STRANGE
LAND

FILE: NOMAD
EYES ONLY